

Additional Information

Tips For Observing and Photographing Dragonflies

Dragonflies can be loosely lumped into categories of “perchers” or “flyers”. Perchers, such as some of the skimmers, have a usual or favorite perch which they return to repeatedly. Some flyers have a usual route, a beat which they fly back and forth in the same area. You can pre-focus your camera or binoculars on that area to get a close look. Some have a large, long beat and are more difficult to predict, so some luck and persistence are required to find them perched. Most odonates are most active in middle of the day, but some are more active early and late, roosting most of the day in the shade. Be prepared, research and study your subjects first to know the preferred habitats. Binoculars, especially close-focus binoculars are a great aid for observing all nature subjects.

Approach slowly, getting closer and snapping away as you go (with today’s digital cameras, you can always delete later), a good distant shot is better than none and will be of some aid in identifying later.

Try to align planes of focus; for example, a side view is usually good, so move to the side for a clear side view of the dragonfly. A “3/4 view” can show face and eyes as well as the side. Some field marks are more important than others in differentiating one species from another. Get more than one angle if possible.

Sun at your back is always good for photographic detail but be ready to use flash to “fill” in the detail on the shadow side if the subject is back-lit or in any dark situation.

About ATBI

This brochure was compiled and developed by the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) group. ATBI is an on-going project in Tennessee State Parks and State Natural Areas. The goal of ATBI is to document all species in Tennessee State Parks, monitor long-term trends in specific taxonomic groups, and promote education about and preservation of all biodiversity with increased science and citizen education efforts. To access the ATBI database, go to www.tn.gov/environment/parks/atbi.

For more information about ATBI, please contact David Hill, 7th Floor, L & C Tower, 401 Church St., Nashville, TN 37243. Email david.r.hill@tn.gov. Phone 615-253-2455.

Dragonfly References

Beaton, Giff. 2007. Dragonflies and Damselflies of Georgia and the Southeast. A Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book.

Dunkle, Sidney. 2000. Dragonflies through Binoculars: A Field Guide to Dragonflies of North America. Oxford University Press.

Nikula, Blair et al. 2002. Stokes Beginner’s Guide to Dragonflies. Little, Brown & Company.

<http://www.odonatacentral.org/>. Dragonfly Society of the Americas. This site has checklists of dragonflies by county.

Collecting of plants or animals in state parks and natural areas is prohibited. Please help preserve Tennessee’s natural heritage by leaving plants and animals for others to enjoy.

MONTGOMERY BELL STATE PARK

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www.tn.gov/environment/parks/MontgomeryBell/

TENNESSEE STATE PARKS DIVISION OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI)

Dragonflies and Damselflies of Montgomery Bell State Park and Dickson County



Photo © Richard Connors

Welcome to the wonderful world of dragonflies at beautiful Montgomery Bell State Park! Of the approximate 154 species of odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) in Tennessee, 52 have been documented in this park and Dickson County.

Above is a picture of a *Ophiogomphus acuminatus*, the Acuminate Snaketail. It is limited in range, occurring only in the gravel and rocky cobble streams of the Highland Rim of Western Middle Tennessee, southern Kentucky and northern Alabama. It has been found in this park.

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Dragonfly and Damselfly Checklist of Montgomery Bell State Park and Dickson County

Damselflies (Zygoptera)

Broad-winged Damselflies (Calopterygidae)

- ☐ Ebony Jewelwing

Spreadwings (Lestidae)

- ☐ Swamp Spreadwing

Pond Damselflies (Coenagrionidae)

- ☐ Blue-fronted Dancer
- ☐ Seepage Dancer
- ☐ Variable Dancer
- ☐ Powdered Dancer
- ☐ Dusky Dancer
- ☐ Double-striped Bluet
- ☐ Familiar Bluet
- ☐ Skimming Bluet
- ☐ Orange Bluet
- ☐ Slender Bluet
- ☐ Vesper Bluet
- ☐ Fragile Forktail
- ☐ Rambur's Forktail

Dragonflies (Anisoptera)

Petaltails (Petaluridae)

- ☐ Gray Petaltail

Dragonflies Darners (Aeshnidae)

- ☐ Common Green Darner
- ☐ Comet Darner
- ☐ Springtime Darner
- ☐ Fawn Darner
- ☐ Swamp Darner

Clubtails (Gomphidae)

- ☐ Unicorn Clubtail

- ☐ Black-shouldered Spinyleg
- ☐ Lancet Clubtail
- ☐ Ashy Clubtail
- ☐ Green-faced Clubtail
- ☐ Dragonhunter
- ☐ Acuminate Snaketail
- ☐ Eastern Least Clubtail
- ☐ Interior Least Clubtail

Cruisers (Macromiidae)

- ☐ Stream Cruiser

Emeralds (Corduliidae)

- ☐ Slender Baskettail
- ☐ Common Baskettail
- ☐ Prince Baskettail
- ☐ Uhler's Sundragon
- ☐ Mocha Emerald

Skimmers (Libellulidae)

- ☐ Calico Pennant
- ☐ Halloween Pennant
- ☐ Swift Setwing
- ☐ Common Pondhawk
- ☐ Blue Corporal
- ☐ Spangled Skimmer
- ☐ Slaty Skimmer
- ☐ Widow Skimmer
- ☐ Great Blue Skimmer
- ☐ Blue Dasher
- ☐ Wandering Glider
- ☐ Eastern Amberwing
- ☐ Common Whitetail
- ☐ Autumn Meadowhawk

- ☐ Carolina Saddlebags
- ☐ Black Saddlebags

Habitat

Montgomery Bell lies in the Western Highland Rim of Tennessee. The rolling hills of Dickson County contain iron ore which lured men by the hundreds to this area. The site of the first Cumberland Presbyterian Church is located on the Park.

Remains of Old Laurel Furnace and old ore pits can be found in this area. The hardwood forest, once heavily cut to clear farmland and to produce charcoal for the iron furnaces, has slowly grown back.

Good spots

*In and along streams, stream-side trails.

*Along the edge of the lakes and in lake-side vegetation.

*Open areas/fields and along the edges of these open areas/fields.

*In and around the native grasses and wildflowers planted on the Audubon certified golf course.

*Around ponds and water features on the golf course.

Notes
